**Guidelines for**
*Mass Gatherings or*
*Large Community Events*
*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications
from the CDC and executive orders.*

_____

The CDC offers a readiness and planning tool for event planners and administrators to help protect staff, volunteers and attendees and slow the spread of COVID-19. Considerations for Events and Gatherings

These guidelines are intended for application in non-health care related places of employment. The foundation guidelines for businesses and employers remains the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

**General Guidelines that Apply to All**
All employers have to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.  In order to re-open and successfully remain open for business, everyone individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1.  Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home.
2.  Practice social distancing of at least six feet distance to the greatest extent possible.
3.  Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol).
4.  Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g. keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g. handrails, workstations, sinks) and remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces.
5.  Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
6.  Consider wearing a cloth face covering when it is difficult to practice social distancing (do not use on children under two years old, people with difficulty breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask themselves).
7.  Strongly cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and throw used tissues away immediately after use.
8.  Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use.
9.  Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

**Guidelines Specifically for Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events**
This interim guidance is intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning mass gatherings or large community events in South Carolina. **A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert,**

**Guidelines for**
*Mass Gatherings or*
*Large Community Events*
*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications
from the CDC and executive orders.*

_____

**festival, conference or sporting event.** Guidance specific to schools and childcare settings, institutions of higher education, and community- and faith-based organizations can be found on [CDC's website focused on prevention COVID-19 spread in communities](#).

**At this time, it is recommended that large gatherings be limited to less than 250 people.** However, the cutoff threshold is at the discretion of the community leadership based on the current circumstances the community is facing and the nature of the event.

Older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions are considered to be at increased risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19. Priority should be given to ensuring the safety of these groups of people, particularly for any mass gatherings that are expected to have a large number of older adults or persons with underlying conditions. [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html)

**Considerations for Mass Gathering**
There are a number of factors to consider when determining the need to postpone or cancel a large gathering. These include:

- ✓ The overall number of attendees. Larger gatherings (for example, more than 250 people) offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- ✓ The number of people attending who are at greater risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19. Older adults and persons with severe pre-existing health conditions are thought to be at increased risk.
- ✓ The density of attendees within a confined area. Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within 6 feet).
- ✓ The potential economic impact to participants, attendees, staff, and the larger community.
- ✓ The level of transmission in your local community and the level of transmission in the areas from which your attendees will travel. To better understand the level of community transmission in your community (and in the communities from which your attendees will be traveling), consult with your local and/or state public health department.
- ✓ If there are ways in which to significantly reduce the number of attendees. For example, for sporting events or school concerts, organizers could consider holding the event but significantly reduce the number of audience members.
- ✓ At a minimal-to-moderate level of community transmission, it is recommended to: Cancel community-wide mass gatherings (for example, >250 people; **the cutoff**

**Guidelines for**
*Mass Gatherings or*
*Large Community Events*
*\*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications
from the CDC and executive orders.\**

**threshold is at the discretion of community leadership based on the** current circumstances the community is facing and the nature of the event or move to smaller groupings.

**Steps to Plan, Prepare and Proceed with a Mass Gathering**
The details of your emergency operations plan should be based on the size, setting and duration of your events, demographics of the participants, complexity of your event operations, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer.

1. Review the existing emergency operations plans for your venues. Develop one specific to your event.
2. Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team at your venues**.** Discuss the emergency operations plans and determine how they may impact aspects of your events, such as personnel, security, services and activities, functions, and resources. Develop a contingency plan that addresses various potential scenarios.
3. Establish relationships with key community partners and stakeholders; include relevant partners such as the local public health department, community leaders, faith-based organizations, vendors, suppliers, hospitals, hotels, airlines, transportation companies and law enforcement. Collaborate and coordinate with them on broader planning efforts. Clearly identify each partner's role, responsibilities and decision-making authority.
4. Address key prevention strategies in your emergency operations plan.
5. Encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Encourage staff and attendees to wear cloth face coverings or face masks, perform social distancing to the extent feasible, and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
6. Handshakes and "high-fives" are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the gathering.
   *\*\*Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials and resources.\*\**
7. Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies to event staff and participants. This includes hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, disposable facemasks and cleaners and disinfectants. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with detergent and water prior to disinfection, especially surfaces that are visibly dirty.
8. Disposable face masks should be kept on-site and available in the event a worker or attendee becomes sick at your event.  Those that become sick should be immediately

**Guidelines for**
*Mass Gatherings or*
*Large Community Events*
*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications
from the CDC and executive orders.*

isolated. Identify a space that can be used as an isolation area until the person goes home. Thoroughly disinfect the area prior to and after the event. *Note: Providing a sick staff member or event participant with a disposable facemask to wear does **not** replace the need for that person to leave as soon as possible, stay home and seek medical advice.*

9.  Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
10. Plan for staff absences**.** Identify critical job functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.
11. **Consider alternatives for event staff and participants who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19, including older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions.** Event organizers can consider reassigning duties for higher-risk staff to have minimal contact with other persons. People in higher-risk groups should consult with their healthcare provider about attending large events.
12. **Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.** This could include electronic messages sent to attendees prior to the event as well as messages requesting that people leave the event if they begin to have symptoms of COVID-19. *Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials and resources.*
13. Plan ways to limit in-person contact for staff supporting your events. Reduce the number of staff needed such as staggering shifts for staff who support essential functions and services during events.
14. Develop flexible refund policies for participants that permit participants the flexibility not to participate without financial penalty.
15. Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events**.** If possible, plan alternative ways for participants to enjoy the events by television, radio or online.
16. **Update and distribute timely and accurate emergency communication information.**
17. Information you share should be easily understood by everyone attending the events. Identify and address potential language, cultural and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and participants.

**Guidelines for**
*Mass Gatherings or*
*Large Community Events*
*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications*
*from the CDC and executive orders.*

_____

DISCLAIMER:  The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes and to help you make informed decisions. Notwithstanding any and all Federal and State requirements, re-opening and resuming activities are at your own discretion.

Although all information in this document is provided in good faith, we make no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the adequacy or completeness of these guidelines.

Under no circumstance shall we have any liability to you for any loss or damage of any kind incurred as a result of the use of these guidelines or reliance on any information provided in this document. Your reliance and use, or your non-reliance, on any information provided in this document is solely at your own risk.